

Universities seek

\$141 million over two years

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (AP) — The state agency overseeing higher education is seeking a funding increase of \$141 million for state universities and the community college system over the next two years.

With history as a guide, members of the Council on Postsecondary Education know there is no guarantee that either the governor or the General Assembly will approve the request, said Sandra Woodley, the agency's vice president for finance.

"In the past, they certainly haven't given us all of the money that we have requested," Woodley said.

Woodley said increased Medicare costs for the state next year could eat into higher-education funding.

The \$141 million is about a 14 percent increase in state university funding. Woodley said the schools currently receive slightly more than \$1 billion in state appropriations.

The council, in a report on the funding request, said each increase is aimed at bringing Kentucky's universities funding to a level that is 5 percent higher than a benchmark created from the average funding for 19 schools.

State Rep. Rob Wilkey, D-Scottsville, said lawmakers haven't funded higher education in recent years.

"We neglected postsecondary education during the last few cycles," Wilkey said.